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SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND



ANNUAL REPORT 1985-1986

Printed Under The Direction Of The
State Budget And Control Board

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STATE DOCUMENTS

south carolina commission for the blind

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TELEPHONE 758-2595

William K. James, Commissioner

June 30, 1986

The Honorable Richard W. Riley
Governor of South Carolina
Columbia, South Carolina

Dear Governor Riley:

On behalf of the Governing Board and the South Carolina Commission for the Blind, I take great pride in submitting our annual report for Fiscal Year 1985-1986.

The year has been one of progress on all fronts as the Commission continues to provide wide-ranging quality service to the blind and visually impaired citizens of South Carolina.

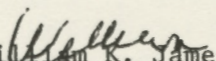
Noteworthy among the year's accomplishments is the expansion of our Outreach Program for the Elderly Blind. Mobile Units are now operating in the Lowcountry, the Midlands and the Upstate to serve the elderly, which comprises the largest segment of the blind population.

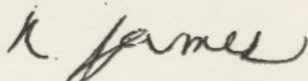
A significant indication of the effectiveness of our rehabilitation efforts is reflected in our arriving at within one percent of a goal of placing 60 percent of our clients in employment at or above minimum wage. This figure is unsurpassed by any other state.

The momentum of last year continues this Fiscal Year with the Commission's Business Enterprise Program. In cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Highways and Public Transportation, six additional vending facilities were constructed on interstate highways. This brings to 94 the total number of facilities operated in the program generating almost \$5 million in revenues for Fiscal Year 1985-1986.

These accomplishments and others described herein reflect the pride and professionalism of Commission staff who work with a continuing commitment to providing quality services through sound management to uphold the public trust placed in us.

Respectfully,


William K. James
Commissioner



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S.C. COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND

GOVERNING BOARD

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(5th Congressional District)
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(Member-At-Large)

LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

The South Carolina Commission for the Blind is in compliance with the provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VI, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and all requirements imposed pursuant thereto to the end that no person shall, on the grounds of sex, race, age, color, national origin, or handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of or be otherwise subjected to discrimination in the provision of any care or service. Any client participant, potential client, or interested person who is of an opinion that benefits are provided on a discriminatory basis has the right to file a complaint with the State Agency or Federal Agency, or both.

LEGAL BLINDNESS QUALIFICATIONS

1. Legal blindness shall be defined as a level of central visual acuity not exceeding 20/200 in the better eye with best correction, or an average of both eyes, or central visual acuity greater than 20/200 but accompanied by limitations in the field of vision such as the widest diameter of the visual field subtends an angle no greater than 20 degrees; or an 80 percent loss of visual efficiency resulting from visual impairment in more than one function of the eye, including visual acuity for distance and near, visual fields, ocular, motility, and other ocular functions and disturbances.
2. "Severe visual disability" is defined as any progressive pathological condition of the eye or eyes supported by an acceptable eye examination, which in the opinion of the examiner may or will result in legal blindness within 24 months.

ADMINISTRATION

The South Carolina Commission for the Blind during Fiscal Year 1985-1986 passed a significant milestone in the agency's development with the celebration of more than two decades of service to the state's blind and visually impaired.

Coinciding with the Twentieth Anniversary observance, the agency was able to complete the tabulation and prioritization of needs and goals based on the results of a statewide survey conducted during last fiscal year. These survey results gleaned from responses from blind persons

throughout the Palmetto State have played an important part in designing new programs and modifying old ones to better match the needs of agency clients.

Notably, the agency's Elderly Outreach Program has been fully implemented with mobile units now established in all three major metropolitan areas of the state. From these three centers, the units are capable of conducting training programs in all rural areas for the largest segment of the blind population--the elderly.

In cooperation with the Charles Webb Easter Seal Center in Charleston, the agency began a preschool pilot project aimed at preparing blind preschoolers for mainstreaming into the public school system. Based on the highly successful accomplishments of this program, plans have been completed for expanding it into other areas of the state.

Stability and experience are two of the key factors in the agency's success in serving clients. The 107 staff members represent some 1,090 years of service, or an average of more than 10 years of loyalty and dedication.

Staff development and training was made available to all employees during the year. With 249 training situations available, 98 percent of the staff took advantage of at least one opportunity.

Program and staff additions during the year included the formation of a Technical Assistance Unit headed by an electrical engineer. The unit will aid in the application of new technology to job sites, thus opening doors to employment of the blind and visually impaired. By conducting job site evaluations and job modifications, this unit has worked with employers to secure jobs previously closed to the blind.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Assisting blind and visually handicapped clients find productive employment and achieve economic independence is a primary goal of the Vocational Rehabilitation Department.

Clients have access to a variety of vocational rehabilitation services, including job development and placement, medical treatment, psychological and vocational evaluation, adjustment to blindness training, vocational training, tools and equipment, and a specialized counseling and guidance service.

In an effort to find productive employment, counselors develop Individual Written Rehabilitation Programs (IWRP). This details the services to be provided that focus on the achievement of objectives specific to each client.

Rehabilitations during Fiscal Year 1985-1986 increased to 258 over 225 during the previous year. Counselors in the Commission's nine district offices placed clients considered rehabilitated in a variety of jobs at or above the minimum wage category. These included: microfilm technician, computer programmer, machine hose cutter, counselor, sales engineer, IRS tax service representative, educational instructor, financial technician, laundry worker, janitor, and attorney.

For clients unable to attend the Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center in Columbia, the Commission dispatches a Mobile Outreach Unit. The unit provides instruction in the activities of daily living, adjustment to blindness skills, and independent travel.

Mobile unit programs this year were held in Greenwood, Greenville, Anderson, Laurens, Spartanburg, Chester, Lancaster, Florence, Charleston, Orangeburg, Summerville and Walterboro.

During this fiscal year, a Commission for the Blind rehabilitation counselor was cited with Case of the Year awards in both South Carolina and the Southeast region by the National Rehabilitation Association. The award was made for success in rehabilitation and placing of a blind client as a computer programmer/analyst.

THE ELLEN BEACH MACK REHABILITATION CENTER

The Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center in Columbia served 112 clients during the 1985-1986 Fiscal Year in a variety of training programs that included adjustment to blindness, vocational evaluation, horticulture, business enterprises and blindcraft.

The center was assigned the agency's Low Vision Clinic in June 1985. During the past fiscal year, the clinic has served 105 clients, providing them with diagnostic evaluations of low vision needs and training them in the appropriate use of these aids so as to benefit and capitalize on their remaining vision. These services are available to clients of the agency without cost, while private individuals are afforded this service at a nominal charge.

BUSINESS ENTERPRISE PROGRAM

The South Carolina Commission for the Blind functions as the State Licensing Agency for the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility Program. The Business Enterprise Program (B.E.P.) of the agency has two major purposes: 1) to provide public and private locations with a high quality food service; and

2) to offer remunerative employment for the state's legally blind and visually impaired.

Overall employee morale is boosted with the provision of food service operations offered by the state's blind licensed vendors. The S.C. Commission for the Blind has helped to increase the opportunity for blind individuals to achieve economic independence and productive employment by training these individuals in all areas of merchandising, such as inventory control, displays, sales promotion, customer service, and placing these individuals in a business enterprise of their own.

Fiscal Year 1985-86 has been very good for the Business Enterprise Program. The S.C. Commission for the Blind in cooperation with the S.C. Department of Highways and Public Transportation has built six additional vending facilities on interstate highways. The Commission built two facilities on I-95, two additional facilities on I-26, and two facilities on I-85, bringing the number to 20 interstate vending facilities on South Carolina highways. These interstate highway facilities create new jobs for the state bringing in additional tax revenues. They also provide opportunities for blind individuals to become self-sufficient rather than tax burdens on the state. A blind licensed vendor is an independent businessman, so his employment is accomplished without the creation of a new state job. Additionally, travelers on South Carolina's interstate highways are provided with a much-needed service.

The B.E.P. program now boasts 94 vending facilities in the state with generated sales of \$4,841,199 during this fiscal year. State sales taxes in the amount of \$242,060 was paid during the year by the blind licensed vendors.

The vending facility program continues to change and grow in many ways. In addition to the expansion of the interstate facilities, more canteen locations are expanding into hot-food preparation and salad-bar operations. These expansions and the positive performance of blind vendors are beginning to eliminate many of the myths concerning the blind, and helping to change the overall attitudes of the sighted public. This benefits the Business Enterprise Program and all blind licensed vendors making South Carolina a leader in providing opportunities for its blind citizens.

PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS

The Prevention of Blindness Department provides a wide range of services in its efforts to either prevent blindness or restore sight. During Fiscal Year 1985-1986, this department served 4,434 clients.

Of the 441 surgeries and hospitalizations sponsored by the Prevention Department, 167 were for cataracts, one of the leading causes of blindness in the state. Eight glaucoma operations were authorized and five enucleations occurred stemming from eye injuries, irreversible pathologies, glaucoma or other old-age injuries. Following surgical removal, six prostheses were fitted to affected patients.

In 1985-1986, 17 children had strabismus operations to correct crossed eyes, while other causes, surgery or hospitalization, accounted for 237 cases.

The department sponsored 596 eye examinations discovered by the agency's visual screening program. As a direct result of the examinations it sponsored, the Prevention of Blindness Department purchased 299 pairs of glasses and 21 contact lenses. It provided 963 re-examinations as a part of its follow-up services. Medication was dispensed to 51 clients during the year.

In cooperation with the Lions Clubs of South Carolina, the Prevention Department assisted in the operation of a mobile health screening unit. During this fiscal year, the unit screened 5,655 individuals.

SPECIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

The Special Services Department is comprised of four service units including Children's Services, Educational Radio for the Blind, Volunteer Services, and the Media Center.

The Children's Services Department served 456 children from birth to rehabilitation age (approximately 16) during the past fiscal year. Services included guidance and counseling, case coordination, parent training, and instructional services to preschool age children.

The department sponsored a statewide conference for families, a Braille class for parents, and initiated a center-based preschool program.

This center-based pilot program has been successful in providing blind children an opportunity to learn skills and concepts that they will need in an academic setting.

The Children's Services staff continued to provide in-service training to a number of professionals in various programs serving blind children across the state.

The Educational Radio for the Blind is a joint project of the South Carolina Educational Television Commission and the South Carolina Commission for the Blind, to provide current print materials such as newspapers and magazines to the visually impaired audience.

Over 1,700 specially designed receivers have been distributed statewide. Volunteers assist the staff in producing 108 hours of programming weekly.

The Media Center is responsible for reproducing print materials in braille or on tape for employed individuals, students and others. With the assistance of volunteers, the Media Center has handled 1,370 requests for specialized materials using 1,812 volunteer hours.

The Volunteer Services Department recruits volunteers to perform a variety of tasks within the Special Services Department and the agency as a whole. Volunteers provide childcare during the parent workshops, produce braille and taped materials, and read on the Educational Radio Network for the Blind. The dollar value of volunteers to the agency is computed according to a formula devised by the Governor's Office of Volunteerism. The value of the volunteer task is weighted according to state personnel classification for the same job. Based on this new formula, the 7,027 hours of volunteer service to the agency is valued at \$54,535.

DISABILITY DETERMINATION

The Disability Determination unit processed claims in which blindness is the primary disabling factor, making decisions on 662 claims during Fiscal Year 1985-1986. Of this number, 46 percent were allowed disability benefits. All were evaluated for referral to the Vocational Rehabilitation, Children's Services, and Prevention of Blindness Departments for possible services.

S.C. COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND

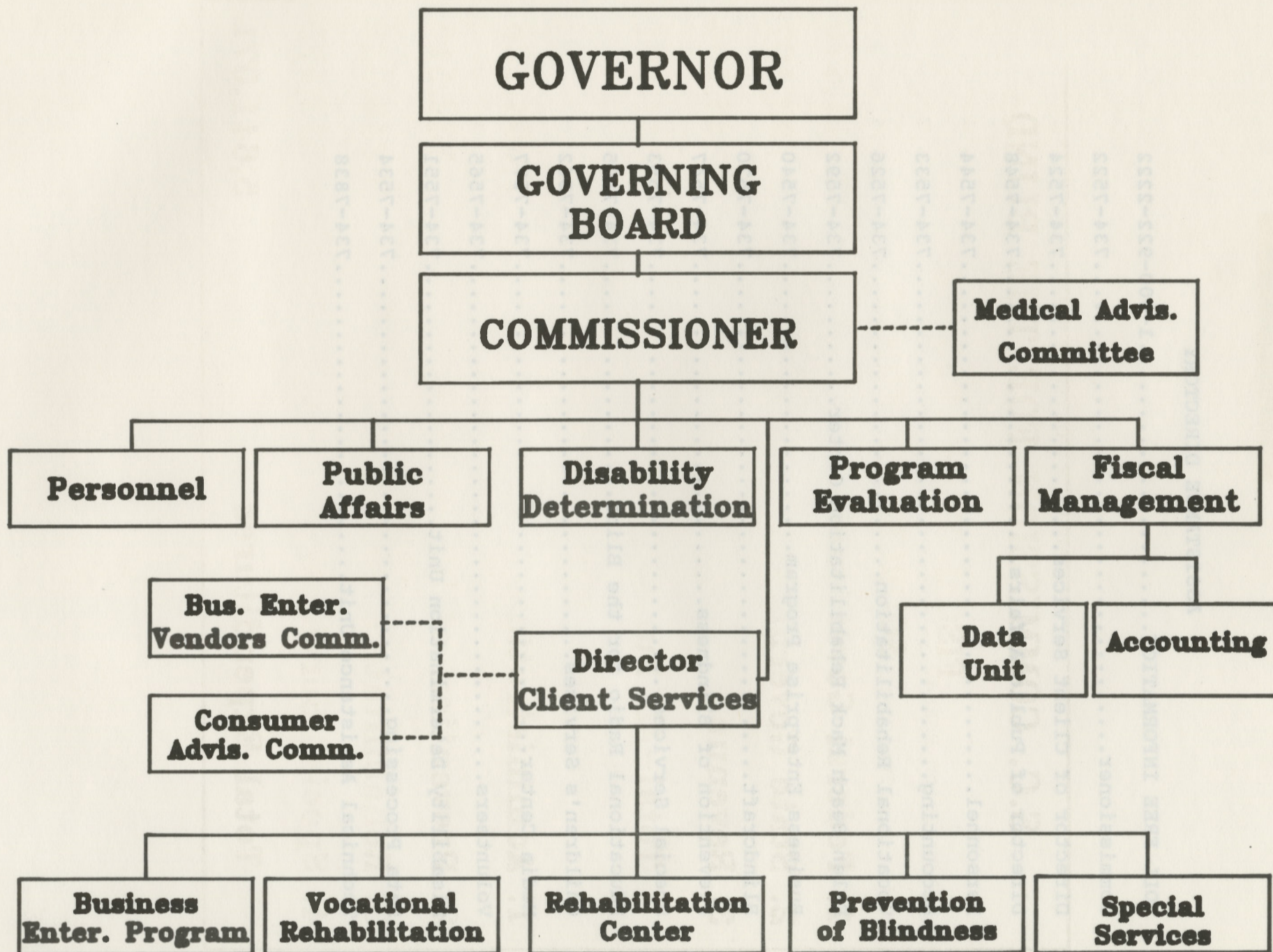
FISCAL YEAR 1985-86

SOURCES OF FUNDS

1. Federal Government	\$2,811,470
2. State Government	2,793,497
3. Revenue	36,104
Total-All Funds	5,641,071

EXPENDITURES

1. Administration	1,354,128
2. Prevention of Blindness	732,546
3. Rehabilitative Services	3,248,922
4. Special Services	305,475
Total Expenditures	5,641,071





ASSISTANCE DIRECTORY

TOLL FREE INFORMATION.....	1-800-922-2222
Commissioner.....	734-7522
Director of Client Services.....	734-7524
Director of Public Affairs.....	734-7548
Personnel.....	734-7544
Accounting.....	734-7533
Vocational Rehabilitation.....	734-7526
Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center.....	734-7592
Business Enterprise Program.....	734-7540
Blindcraft.....	734-7570
Prevention of Blindness.....	734-7547
Special Services.....	734-7553
Educational Radio for the Blind.....	734-7555
Children's Services.....	734-7562
Media Center.....	734-7577
Volunteers.....	734-7565
Disability Determination Unit.....	734-7551
Data Processing.....	734-7534
Technical Assistance Unit.....	734-7838

